

Aug 12 1977 (3)

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WILLIAM D. McELROY
Chancellor at San Diego

August 12, 1977

Professor Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Josh:

I am not so sure that I can be of a great deal of help to you, except to clarify one very basic point. I am not quite sure that 1939 was the exact year in which I talked with Beadle about the microorganisms for biochemical mutants, but I do know that I did the following summer (1940). That was the only time I went back to Stanford after graduation. I did so to take a physiology course and to visit with Beadle in his lab. It was then that he showed me the Neurospora growth tubes and how to isolate the ascospores. By this time (the summer of 1940), he was well underway in working with Neurospora which leads me to believe that he must have begun this work some months earlier. Surely, Beets must have some records on all of this.

The following summer of 1941, I was full time at the Hopkins Marine Station and did not see Beets until later as a post-doc in 1945 when I did have a chance to talk with Ed before he left for Yale. I remember at the time I was writing a review on a book that was claiming that bacteria had nuclei. I have forgotten the author; but if it's important, let me know, and I'll do some searching. I also remember talking with Ed about this, and he "saw no reason why bacteria could not have primitive nuclei because they obviously had genetic material that was passed on in some quantitative way to the next generation."

I know nothing about the Taylor-Tressider battle, but I do remember Beets going through great agony in trying to make a decision whether or not to go to Caltech. I remember when we were all sitting around talking about this that one reason he was going was to make Caltech a better biology department than Columbia which, at that time, was considered to be the #1 department in the country.

McElroy, W.D.

August 12, 1977
Professor Joshua Lederberg
Stanford, California 94305

-2-

I do hope that this information is of some use to you.
Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

W. D. McElroy
Chancellor